



**U. S. Department of Justice  
U. S. Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Texas**  
*Chuck Rosenberg • United States Attorney*

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

DATE: January 4, 2006

John Yembrick  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Phone: 713/1567-9388 Fax: 713/718-3389  
E-Mail: [usatty.txs@usdoj.gov](mailto:usatty.txs@usdoj.gov)  
Website: [www.usdoj.gov/usao/txs](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/txs)

**PSJA-ISD TRUSTEE PLEADS GUILTY TO BRIBERY SCHEME**

(McALLEN, TX) – United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg today announced that Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District ("PSJA-ISD") trustee Guadalupe Jaime Santa Maria, 54, has been convicted of conspiring to receive bribes from a local contractor in exchange for favorable votes on PSJA-ISD construction contracts.

Santa Maria pled guilty to the federal felony offense at a late afternoon hearing on Tuesday, January 3, 2006, before United States District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa. Santa Maria faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years in federal prison, without parole, and a maximum fine of \$250,000. The court permitted Santa Maria to remain on bond pending his sentencing scheduled for March 17, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.

"Government is not for sale," said U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg. "Citizens have every right to expect - and demand - that government officials conduct their business in a lawful and proper manner. We will continue to root out corruption wherever and whenever we find it."

Santa Maria was indicted along with Alonso Cardenas, Jr., 58, a McAllen-area general and masonry contractor in July 2005. The indictment accused and both men now stand convicted of participating in a conspiracy to commit extortion, mail fraud, and bribery concerning a federally funded governmental agency between 2000 and 2004.

**#more#**

The scheme involved Cardenas providing money and services to Santa Maria in exchange for Santa Maria's influence as a school district trustee in the award of PSJA-**ISD** contracts to Cardenas.

At the re-arraignment hearing, Santa Maria admitted receiving \$5,000 in cash from Cardenas in exchange for the award of a contract to one of Cardenas's companies for work at PSJA-**ISD** facilities mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Santa Maria also admitted accepting a total of \$3800 in improvements and repairs to his home from Cardenas in exchange for his influence in the awarding of PSJA-**ISD construction-related** contracts.

Cardenas was convicted for his role in the conspiracy in August 2005, and is pending sentencing on March 20, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.

The case was investigated by agents with the **McAllen** Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Dallas Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Larry Eastepp of the Public Corruption Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

**###**